

Housing Commission Meeting Minutes for May 11, 2022

Location: Walter Stiles Conference Room, City Hall, 2nd floor

I. Meeting called to order at 5:06pm with welcome and introductions.

• Members Present:

1. Jessica Margeson
2. Kate Marquis - alternate
3. Peter Capano
4. Joe Wichert - alternate
5. Zach Palmer
6. Jean Mugabo
7. Chris Wellington

II. Invited Guest Presenter from Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority

• Nicole Hudson was unable to attend this meeting. Commissioner Margeson will reschedule Nicole Hudson, Leased Housing Coordinator for MHRA, for June 8th or June 22nd as Commissioner Wellington has scheduled the City Economic Development Director, Jodie Nazaka, for the April 27th Commission meeting. Commissioner Marquis will reschedule with the Director of Homelessness Initiatives, Schonna Green, as she is also scheduled to speak on the 27th. Discussion covered agenda item IV.a regarding guest presenters.

III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – 4/11/22

• Chair Capano suggested changes to the minutes. Clerk read proposed changes out loud for the group.

MOTION: to approve the April 11, 2022 Housing Commission Meeting Minutes as amended. Motion made by Chair Capano and seconded by Commissioner Margeson. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

a. Upcoming guest presenters update

• See agenda item II

V. New Business – 5:22

a. Planning Board May 5th Assessments/Recommendations

- Chair Capano reviewed the email titled Planning Board Collaboration received through the manchesterhousingcommission@gmail.com contact from the Planning Board Chair Bryce Kaw-uh. As bullet points there were 4 suggested areas where the Housing Commission may be helpful: 1. Land Use Codes Updates, 2. Developer Acceptance of Housing Choice Vouchers, 3. Site Plan Assessments, 4. General Recommendations on Process Improvements. Discussion as to how to best accomplish the suggestions. Commissioner Margeson volunteered to work on vouchers with discussion following on the City of Nashua's processes.
- Commissioner Wichert asked if the Chair will reply to the Planning Board Chair's email. Chair Capano will respond to the email and thank him for the consideration.
- Commissioner Wichert reviewed an email from Jeff Belanger regarding more input into the first draft of the zoning ordinances re-write through focus groups.
- Commissioner Margeson brought up writing a monthly article for Manchester InkLink. Commissioner Mugabo agreed to writing an article a month on the Housing Commission's work.
- Commissioner Wellington asked if there's a way to encourage larger projects to come to us first for a memo of support. Would the Planning Department urge a developer to contact the Housing Commission if the project met certain criteria.
- Commissioner Palmer mentioned that the full suggested Planning Board list may be a lot for our Commission to accomplish. We have access to experienced partners like Dean Christon for counsel.

b. On-going discussion – Torrington Properties 5:55

- Commissioner Palmer shared a communication from Torrington Properties PR firm seeking support from the Housing Commission for the 305 unit (12 are affordable) project. Commissioner Wellington shared that the project is still in review with the Planning Board. Discussion on how the Commission measures the number of affordable units per a project and who verifies the company is following through on the affordability.
- Commissioner Wellington shared a couple of questions on the project: 1. What does affordability mean to the Property owner 2. How will they find the tenants for the affordable units.
- Discussion by Commissioners on finding the sweet spot for affordable housing at all income levels. Commissioner Wichert did a quick addition of affordable and market rate projects currently in the pipeline vs. the 2000 units needed as determined by the Housing Task Force in 2021.

- Discussion on whether to approve a Memo of Support for the project. Additional questions need to be answered before supporting a Memo of Support. Those questions include: What is the specific number of affordable units, What AMI will affordable be calculated at, Who would maintain the affordable nature of the units, Will they accept vouchers as this will alleviate concerns over monitoring.
- Chair Capano will rough out a letter to invite Torrington Properties to the May 25th meeting to answer the questions.

b. On-going discussion – Appoint Chair for May 25th meeting

- Chair Capano appointed Commissioner Margeson Chair for the May 25th meeting.

VI. Other Business/Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Wellington motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Margeson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:26pm

NEXT MEETING: May 25th, 2022 at 5pm in the Walter Stiles Conference Room on the second floor at City Hall.